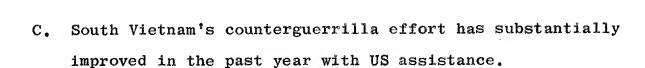
## SOUTH VIETNAM

- A. The Communist campaign to win control of South Vietnam is essentially one of political subversion in which military action plays an important role.
  - 1. This campaign is largely directed from Hanoi.
  - 2. The Communists are trying, by creating a sense of insecurity and depriving the Diem government of control of the peasantry, to pave the way for a final political takeover.
- B. The Communist military effort involves about 23,000-25,000 full-time military personnel and over 10,000 local auxiliaries.
  - 1. The bulk of Viet Cong forces are locally recruited or impressed South Vietnamese peasants, but some of their cadres and more complex equipment are infiltrated from North Vietnam.
  - 2. For lighter weapons and ammunition they rely primarily upon capture from government troops, and upon indigenous sources for food, shelter and other non-military supplies.
  - 3. The guerrilla effort could continue without outside support, but such support has almost certainly been essential to the recently improved Viet Cong effort.



- 1. Armed Forces regulars have increased to about 215,000 plus paramilitary forces of 75,000 Civil Guard, 100,-000 Self Defense Corps, and some 40,000 citizens' irregular groups.
- 2. Substantial weakness persist, however, such as lack of aggressiveness and firm leadership at all command levels, political interference, a high desertion rate, military abuse of the peasantry, and inadequate intelligence.
- D. To attack the problem of political support, the government has instituted complementary politico-military programs involving the construction of strategic hamlets and clear-and-hold operations.
  - 1. These programs are meeting some success—over 5,000 hamlets are reported completed, but vary in effect—iveness primarily because of administrative weak—nesses.
  - 2. The Government tends to view stragetic hamlets as a panacea, and to underestimate the importance of systematic political consolidation of military gains.

- E. The Communists are believed aiming to win control of South Vietnam without resorting to overt military attacks from the North.
  - 1. They evidently hope that a combination of military pressure and political deterioration will either create conditions for delivering a coup de grace or lead to a political settlement, as in Laos, favorable to their efforts.
  - 2. They also remain ready to exploit any favorable opportunity such as a non-Communist coup against Diem.
- F. With US help, South Vietnam probably stand a good chance to contain the Communists militarily.
  - 1. However, the government's methods of operating have reduced its effectiveness, politically, and militarily.
  - 2. The Diem government has alienated many educated Vietnamese, and failed to win positive loyalty from its people.
  - 3. It is unlikely that US involvement can be substantially curtailed or a lasting reduction in the Communist threat achieved so long as present political conditions persist.